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VACATIONS FOR WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL FORESTS

A radio interview between Mrs. Elizabeth Pitt, U. S. Forest Service, and Morse Salisbury, Radio Service, broadcast Friday, July 30, 1937, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour.

AUG 3 1937

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SALISBURY:

Mrs. Elizabeth Pitt of the Forest Service is here in the studio today with facts about vacations for women in the National Forests. Mrs. Pitt has been visiting campgrounds all the way from the Appalachians to the Sierra Nevadas. I gather just about everybody except Duke Du Mars and Josephine Hemphill is camping in the National Forests, Mrs. Pitt.

MRS. PITTS:

That's right, Morse. From Washington to San Francisco, it looks as though the whole country is taking a vacation. I've seen summer gypsies before, but never anything like this summer.

SALISBURY:

Would you call it a record-breaker then?

MRS. PITTS:

You'd say it's a record-breaker if you could have been with me up on Dolly Copp campground in the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire, or Pinecrest Lake in the Stanislaus National Forest in California. The American family is summering out this year, and that means everybody from Grandpa to the baby.

SALISBURY:

The baby? Is a forest camp any place for a baby?

MRS. PITTS:

Well, the babies are there and in all fairness to the mothers I must say that they seem to be doing all right.

SALISBURY:

You mean big babies. Not little ones?

MRS. PITTS:

I mean babies that don't walk to camp. These babies bring their beds.

SALISBURY:

Bring their beds? You mean regular baby cribs in camp?

MRS. PITTS:

Yes sir. The same little white crib, they use at home. I counted three in one camp in the Sierra National Forest in the California back country when I was there ten days ago.

(over)

SALISBURY:

Maybe you'd better not go on with this. You're about to shatter one of my illusions. I always thought camping was something of a man's game.

MRS. PITTS:

Oh, don't be alarmed. It still is. I saw just as many men as ever in the forest camps. But the women are becoming just as interested in camping as the men and they're doing just as well at it. Camping is the family event of the year. The whole family keep busy all day long, swimming, fishing, hiking through the woods, and of course, eating. At night there's the campfire with singing and story-telling and marshmallow roasting. Say, what do you suppose Supervisor Heaton up in the Arapahoe Forest near Denver told me?

SALISBURY:

Ed Heaton? I don't know, but he's likely to tell you almost anything.

MRS. PITTS:

He said women were just as good campers as men and that they could flock into his campgrounds as much as they pleased and bring all the kids.

SALISBURY:

Ed Heaton said that -- that old-timer?

MRS. PITTS:

He did. He said the men like to do the cooking out of doors and that they do it well, -- but sometimes when it comes to cleaning up, unless they're real woodsmen, men aren't so good. But when the women are along, the forest camp is likely to be clean, no matter how crowded it is. For myself, I can say that I saw but two slovenly camps while I was out and I saw one camp that had three thousand men, women and children in it over the weekend.

SALISBURY:

So you like the looks of the National Forest campgrounds and the National Forests this year?

MRS. PITTS:

The forests are beautiful. The old-timers say they never looked better. There was lots of snow in the West last winter and plenty of rain in the East this spring. I've seen all sorts of trees during the last month from the beautiful ones here in Washington to the Big Trees in the High Sierra and I never saw them more beautiful.

SALISBURY:

Oh, the Big Trees? That's right, you did get a chance to see them in California, didn't you?

MRS. PITTS:

Morse, standing among those great trees in California that were full grown before the beginning of the Christian Era is a spiritual experience that no one ever forgets. And the sheer size of the things thrills the statistical sense of an American. I saw one enormous tree that had enough lumber in it to build three CCC camps.

SALISBURY:

And how much lumber would that be?

MRS. PITTS:

About 360,000 board feet.

SALISBURY:

About 360,000 board feet? Well, well. A tall story, -- but true, I suppose. Which leads me to ask you about fishing on the National Forests.

MRS. PITTS:

Well, I did go fishing.

SALISBURY:

Yes, Betty?

MRS. PITTS:

I'm sticking by the truth, Morse. I didn't get a thing. But I had supper in a camp where the lady of the camp had been fishing and came home with the limit. She had two rainbow trout that weighed over three pounds, and you know, I don't believe there's any cooking odor on earth that can beat a pan of trout over a camp fire --

SALISBURY:

Betty, let me call gently to your attention the fact that Duke Du Mars and I have been here in Washington all summer.

MRS. PITTS:

Sorry, Morse, sorry. No more mention of trout cooking over campfires. --

SALISBURY:

That's a civilized attitude, Betty. -- Say, did you happen to see one of those mountain-peak finders out in the Rockies.

MRS. PITTS:

Oh --. Fred Johnson showed me one in the Arapahoe National Forest in Colorado. It's on the Echo Lake road about 30 or 40 miles from Denver. The CCC boys built it and they call it the Arapahoe Viewpoint. It's an affair like a sun dial and you can locate twenty-three great mountain peaks with it that are more than 10,000 feet high. For instance, if there's no one about to show you Long's Peak, and the day is clear enough, you can find it yourself with the mountain peak finder.

SALISBURY:

Mountain peaks in a peak finder?

MRS. PITTS:

If I stay off trout, you should refrain from puns, Morse.

SALISBURY:

Sorry, but the brute forces in me get loose that way sometimes.

MRS. PITTS:

You need to get out into the forests, Morse. There are 170 million acres of National Forests with all sorts of things in them that are strange and wonderful and beautiful and glorious and invigorating and truly civilizing --

SALISBURY:

Wait --- wait, just a second. We've only a few minutes left. You haven't given the ladies of the campgrounds any advice on cold creams and things.

MRS. PITTS:

I have one hint that Mrs. Benedict gave me at North Fork, California. Her husband is the Supervisor of the Sierra National Forest, and he says she's the best fisherman and camper on the West Coast.

SALISBURY:

What's her suggestion?

MRS. PITTS:

She said to be sure to take along a really good cold cream and some hard candy. The cold cream takes off the leathery look that is decidedly unbecoming to most women, and the hard candy helps to satisfy a craving for sweets that the average camp menu doesn't satisfy.

SALISBURY:

That sounds reasonable. Have you any more ideas?

MRS. PITTS:

Yes, I'd like to give the Farm and Home folks a recipe for Ranger's Mulligan that I picked up out West. How about it?

SALISBURY:

Go ahead. I'll take notes myself. Just a second until I can get a pencil and paper.

MRS. PITTS:

It's easy to make and that's the kind of dishes to cook on a vacation. You'll need a sauce pan and a frying pan to make it.

SALISBURY:

All right. Then what?

MRS. PITT:

The ingredients are one can of corned beef, one-half cup rice, 4 slices of bacon and one can of tomatoes. Boil the rice until it is well done. Fry the bacon brown and mix in the tomatoes, corn beef and rice. Season with salt and pepper and let the whole mixture simmer for 15 minutes.

SALISBURY:

Let's repeat that. One can of corned beef, one half cup of rice, 4 slices of bacon and one can of tomatoes. Boil the rice until it is well done.

MRS. PITT:

And fry the bacon and mix in the tomatoes, corned beef and rice, and season with salt and pepper.

SALISBURY:

And then let the whole mixture simmer for 15 minutes.

MRS. PITT:

And then come and get it.

SALISBURY:

Okay. I'm going to try that on my next camping trip.

MRS. PITT:

It's plenty good, but you need the beauty of a National Forest to make it taste just perfect, and the smell of the pines and the murmur of rushing waters in the brook and the whisper of the waves on the lake shore, and --

SALISBURY:

Yes, Betty. Yes. Yes. Yes. But I think we'd better stop. I know there were 24,000,000 vacationists who visited the National Forests last year and I expect there'll be more this year, but I don't think you should make me hungry like that. I'm going out to look for some trout and mulligan stew and scenery in a National Forest almost any minute now.

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